

**Thomas Jefferson to William Short, June 12, 1807,
from the Thomas Jefferson and William Short
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.
Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

Thomas Jefferson to William Short

Washington June 12. 07

Dear Sir

Mr. Jefferson not having compleated the sale of my tobacco, I am enabled to send you on 750 D. only which I now do in a bill of the bank of the US. here on that at Philadelphia. It will therefore be another month before the balance can be liquidated. I am in hopes that that will be in time for your departure, but should it not, you may direct the disposal of it with the same certainty as if you were here.

The proposition in your letter of May 16. of adding an umpire to our discordant negotiators at Paris, struck me favorably on reading it, and reflection afterward strengthened my first impressions. I made it therefore a subject of consultation with my coadjutors, as is our usage, for our government, altho' in theory, subject to be directed by the unadvised will of the President, is, and from it's origin has been a very different thing in practice. The minor business in each department is done by the head of the department, on consultation with the President alone, but all matters of importance or difficulty are submitted to all the heads of departments composing the cabinet, sometimes by the President's consulting them separately & successively as they happen to call on him; but in the gravest cases by calling them together, discussing the subject maturely, and finally taking the vote on which the President counts himself but one; so that in all important cases the Executive is,

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in part, a Directory, which certainly the President might control but of this there was never an example either in the first or the present administration. I have heard indeed that my predecessor sometimes decided things against his council by dashing & trampling his wig on the floor. This only proves what you & I knew, that he had a better heart than head. I adopted, in the present case, the mode of separate consultation, because it was that in which I could best be able to keep down my suspicion that the idea had come from you; the opinion of each member, taken separately, was that the addition of a third negociator was not at this time advisable. For the present therefore the question must rest. Mr. Bowdoin, we know is anxious to come home; & is detained only by the delivery of not deserting his post. In the existing temper between him & his colleague it would certainly be better that one of them should make an opening for recomposing the commission more harmoniously. Should this take place, the question here will come on in a form more likely to unite opinions, & not the less likely for your being there ready for action, but the course which it may take is too hypothetical for furnishing any motive which should influence either your stay or departure from this country.

I see with extreme concern that you have received an impression that my attachments to you have become lessened; and that you have drawn this inference from circumstances taking place while you were at Washington. What these circumstances could be is to me incomprehensible, but one thing I certainly know, that they have been misconstrued. That this change could not be previous to my retirement from the government in 1794 your appointment to France, to Holland to Spain are proofs, and if, during my present place in government, I have not met your desires, the public motives which have been frankly declared have given the real ground. You think them not founded in fact but if the testimony we receive is of different complexions, neither should wonder at the difference of conclusion drawn by the other, and I do trust that you will become sensible that there is no necessity at least for supposing a change in affections, which are the same now they have

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ever been. Certainly, I shall not on my part, permit a difference of view on a single subject, to efface the recollections & attachments of a whole life.

Should you not be able to fix on a manager for Indian Camp, before my return home, which will be within a month, I will see while there, whether any body can be found, capable of the business, & willing to undertake it on the terms you offer. I salute you with affection and respect. Th. Jefferson

FC (Jefferson Papers, DLC)